

# **EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT**

**East Providence City Hall**

**145 Taunton Avenue**

**East Providence, Rhode Island 02914**

## **School Committee Meeting**

**May 8, 2007**

### **Open Session**

**Mrs. Morris called the meeting to order at 6:30PM. Four Members were present: Robert Faria, David Medeiros, Steven Santos, and Mildred Morris. Also present: Dr. Jacqueline Forbes, Superintendent of Schools and Andrew Thomas, Esq. A motion was made by Mr. Medeiros to move to Executive Session in accordance with RI General Laws, Section 42-46-5 (a) (1) Personnel, (a) (2) Litigation, seconded by Mr. Santos. Vote 4-0.**

**Public Session reconvened at 7:30PM. A motion was made by Mr. Faria to return to public session and to seal the minutes of the Executive Session, seconded by Mr. Medeiros. Vote 4-0.**

**The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and a Moment of Silence were observed.**

**Record of Previous Meetings – A motion was made by Mr. Medeiros to approve the minutes of meetings held on April 4, 9, and 10, 2007, seconded by Mr. Santos. Vote 4-0.**

### **Chair's Report**

**Sean Snead, Student Liaison, presented a report on high school activities.**

**Mr. Faria mentioned that on June 5, 2007, Senior Projects will be displayed at the high school. He encouraged all to take advantage of a great opportunity for the community to get a glimpse of what this new requirement for all high school seniors is all about.**

**Mrs. Morris offered thanks to all teachers on National Teachers' Day for their contributions to our high performing schools. Mrs. Morris reported that Martin Middle School's band will be performing with the RI Philharmonic tomorrow and Riverside Middle students will be performing the National Anthem at McCoy Stadium on June 12; she commended the music program. This week Dr. Forbes, Mrs. Waterman and Mrs. Morris will attend a state house hearing regarding legislation on special education mandates.**

### **Hearings – None**

**Reading of Communications – A letter received from Mr. Robert Enos**

regarding ethical standards and process was accepted as record for the School Committee.

**New Business - Financial Audit Report – Joanna LHereau, of Parmelee, Poirier & Associates attended to answer questions regarding the completion of the audit report and financial statements for the year ended October 31, 2006. She thanked the Business Office staff for assisting in supplying documentation for the audit.**

**Dr. Forbes asked the School Committee to enter into a professional service contract for the FY 2007-2008 budget year for a fiscal and program audit, which will look for cost savings methods and examine programming. Dr. Forbes asked for a motion to engage an audit firm to assist with preparation of the 2007-08 budget. A motion was made by Mr. Faria to approve, seconded by Mr. Medeiros. Mr. Faria asked about the bid policy and if this contract might evade that process. Attorney Andrew Thomas advised that there is a need to go out to bid to engage an expert and we would be doing this on a similar basis as the City in engaging a consultant. Mr. Faria asked about the Memo of Understanding between the City and Schools; a management audit of this type is needed and long overdue as we need to have a grasp of where we are by having an entire audit process. Vote 4-0.**

**Report of Superintendent and Staff -**

**Dr. Forbes joined with the School Committee in sending heartfelt**

appreciation to all teachers during Teacher Appreciation Week; presently, East Providence has a Regents Commended High School, 2 high performing middle schools, 5 high performing elementary schools, 3 moderately performing elementary schools and a nationally accredited pre-school program at Meadowcrest. She thanked all for a job well done.

Dr. Forbes also reported: that the community sent a clear message to the School Committee and City Council that they support the concept of neighborhood schools and two middle schools; during the upcoming budget process, she appealed to the city to avoid shifting our energies away from student achievement; the focus must remain on teaching and learning. Presently, contract negotiations are in progress with the maintenance and custodial union and she remains hopeful on reaching an agreement with the teachers union. Work continues with state legislators to seek relief from the RI General Assembly. A joint meeting of the School Committee and City Council will be held on May 31st to consider consolidation of services, as the School Committee continues to explore ways to provide the city with outstanding educational opportunities at a reasonable cost to the city.

The FY 2006-07 Financial Report as of April 30, 2007 was presented by Dr. Hilton. Mr. Medeiros asked about the projected deficit number; Dr. Hilton advised that 11 students entered and 5 left the system. Discussion took place regarding the budget.

## **Awarding of Bids**

**Fall Photographs for Grades PK-8 – A sub-committee comprised of parents, administrators and the School Committee met and voted to recommend that the bid for fall photographs be awarded to Mare Studios. Tabulation of bids on file. (This is a non-budgeted item). Motion by Mr. Medeiros to approve, seconded by Mr. Faria. Vote 4-0.**

## **Personnel Recommendations**

### **Resignations**

**Alan Svendson Asst. Athletic Director – High School  
Effective end of 2006-07 school year**

**Richard Hoppman Boys' Cross Country Coach, High School  
Effective end of 2006-07 school year**

**William McEnery Golf Coach, High School  
Effective end of 2006-07 school year**

**Alex Butler Assistant Girls' Volleyball Coach, High School  
Effective April 11, 2007**

**Jose DaSilva Maintenance Mechanic A**

**Effective May 8, 2007**

**Motion: Medeiros/Second: Faria. Vote 4-0.**

### **Parental Leave**

**Ann Ackerman (Year 2) Grade 5 Teacher, Silver Spring  
2007-2008 School Year**

**Motion: Medeiros/Second: Faria. Vote 4-0**

### **Extended Personal Leave**

**Kevin O'Grady (Year 2) Social Studies Teacher, Riverside M/S  
2007-2008 School Year**

**Motion: Medeiros/Second: Faria. Vote 4-0.**

### **Facilities Update**

**Mr. Barilla reported that the old oil tank was removed from the high school and a new 25,000 gallon tank was installed. A new side walk was installed by the City over the tank. A new main circuit breaker was installed at Silver Spring School during April recess. Mr. Faria asked about the railing on the stairs. Mr. Santos asked about the Tools for Schools meeting. Mr. Barilla reported that the Department of Health addressed all principals, and representative nurses and custodians for each school and each school will be setting up a plan. Mr. Faria asked about timelines on the plans. Mr. Daft stated that each school will form their own teams with parent representatives and plans will be in place per School Committee policy.**

**Field Trip Request – Dr. Caswell was present to request approval of a trip request by the Flag Corp to travel to University of MA at Amherst on May 12, 2007 where they will participate in a showcase of talent. A motion was made by Mr. Medeiros, seconded by Mr. Santos. Vote 4-0.**

**Request for Home Schooling – A motion was made by Mr. Faria to approve a request, seconded by Mr. Medeiros. Vote 4-0. In a response to Mr. Faria's question about requirements, Dr. Forbes advised there are required courses at various grade levels.**

**School Lunch Price Increase – In response to information received from the Business Manager, Dr. Forbes recommended that the School Committee approve an increase of .25 cents beginning September 1, 2007. A motion was made by Mr. Faria, seconded by Mr. Santos. Vote 5-0.**

**2007-08 School Calendar Revision – Dr. Forbes requested that the School Committee approve changing the date of graduation from June 21, 2008 to June 14, 2008. The original decision was based on a RIDE requirement regarding the length of the school year, which has been modified. A motion was made by Mr. Faria to approve, seconded by Mr. Medeiros. Vote 4-0.**

**Curriculum Update – Mr. Daft requested that Terry Allard, teacher at**

**East Providence High School, report on the J.O.B.S. program, which increases employment opportunities for students with disabilities through community based job training experiences and allows students to learn work skills. A grant, in collaboration with the City, is in the works for employment opportunities with businesses in the City; employment preferences will be given to East Providence students.**

**Mr. Daft advised that East Providence has been working with East Bay Collaborative to provide opportunities for teachers to review best practices. Mrs. McNulty and Mr. Izzi, high school teachers, presented their project; in order to improve instruction in the classroom, their classrooms have been opened to other schools and administrators to show what is being done to improve literacy and to show the best in collaborative programs.**

**Request for Textbooks – Mr. Daft reported that the high school has been piloting new Prentice Hall books and Dr. Forbes recommended approval to move forward with the purchase of books, which have been approved by both middle and high school department chairs. A motion was made by Mr. Faria, seconded by Mr. Medeiros to approve. Vote 4-0.**

**Summer School – Dr. Forbes requested that the School Committee approve an increase in summer school fees in order to make the program more self-sustaining, as the last increase was in 2003.**



**Summer School tuition would increase by \$20. per course with a one time initial registration fee of \$10 for East Providence residents and \$20 for non-residents. Tuition will be \$110 per course for East Providence residents and \$130 per course for non-residents. In order for a course to be offered, it requires a minimum of 12 students and under sub-scribed courses will be eliminated. This would allow a self sufficient summer school for teachers, administrator and a secretary. Motion by Mr. Faria to approve, seconded by Mr. Santos. Vote 4-0.**

**Mr. Faria asked about the status of the NEASC accreditation. Dr. Forbes requested that a brief report be given at the June School Committee meeting. Dr. Caswell reported that a draft report must be completed by June 1st and the high school is on target according to the guidelines.**

### **Report of Sub-Committees**

**Mr. Medeiros reported that budget sub-committee meetings are scheduled for May 16, 17, 24 and 30, 2007. The Family Involvement Team met with Mr. Daft last week and is working at redrafting School Improvement Plans.**

### **Unfinished Business**

**Amended Policy IV.D.1. Placement, Promotion and Retention Policy-2nd Passage – A motion was made by Mr. Faria to approve**

**second passage of the policy, seconded by Mr. Medeiros.**

**Vote 4-0.**

**Emergency Response Plan Update – Mr. Rodericks reported that in order to refine the written response plan and to reaffirm our policy, a meeting was recently held with police and fire departments. School site plans are being reviewed and each school will report back with recommendations for their individual building. He continues to work with the City for a system to provide photo ID badges for all employees. It was decided that if a code red occurred in any building, the announcement will be made to the entire school district through the Connect-Ed electronic message system and through the media. A second Connect-Ed would then provide more specifics and centers will be set up for families. Some procedures are still under study and all will continue to look for better answers. The School Department will be meeting again with police and fire officials and an update will be provided at the June meeting. Dr. Forbes asked if training for principals had been scheduled.**

**Ratification of Emergency Contract – Dr. Forbes requested that the School Committee ratify an emergency contract (per DEM requirements) for the affractation tank, which was necessary to place the oil tank in the ground at the High School. A motion was made by Mr. Faria, seconded by Mr. Medeiros to approve. Dr. Forbes reported there was an additional \$20,000 cost involved in this project. Vote 4-0.**

## **Payment of Bills**

### **Local Operating Bill List:**

**Warrant #000733 4/27/07 \$1,686,816.48**

**Motion: Medeiros/Second: Faria. Vote 4-0.**

### **Federal Bill List:**

**Warrant #000731 4/20/07 \$ 438,423.25**

**Motion: Medeiros/Second: Faria. Vote 4-0.**

**Mrs. Morris asked about mileage payments for transportation, as some charges appeared high; she also questioned expenses for clock repairs. She asked if descriptions on the bill list could be more detailed. Mr. Santos asked if more detail could be provided. Dr. Hilton advised that the computer system provides a small space to give a description; if the state approves, we will be getting a new system.**

## **Question and Answer Period**

**Mr. Riley questioned Chicago Math and the cost of \$100,000 for the replacement of books. He asked why the entire system was not getting a new program.**

**Mr. Enos said this was the first time the School Committee had asked questioned about expenses. The School Committee did a great job**

allowing people to speak on school closings. On the school crisis, take care of students and taxpayers and work with the city to consolidate jobs; when Mr. Barilla retires, it is the perfect opportunity.

This becomes a power struggle between the City and School Department. He felt there is duplication between City and School Department services and asked that it not be dragged out. Also, it was brought up at another meeting there might be two segments to speak at meetings. Mrs. Morris responded that it had been talked about it, but the School Committee has not moved on it. Mr. Faria asked to look at agendas of other communities.

Mr. Fahey talked about the well defined stresses on the budget and the need to recognize that the community as a whole has limited resources and there is a difference between needs and wants. He called attention to potential school closings, which caused stress. He asked what the School Committee could do as policy makers to relieve stresses; he proposed cost sharing health premium for all employees, co-pay prescriptions and office visits; cooperation between both bodies; mutually agreeing to make policies for the well being of the city; a cost effective health administrator. The City needs unity; explore buybacks with the City Council and try to work out a mutually agreeable plan of attack. He mentioned that school employees take cars home after work. Mr. Medeiros asked for this issue to be placed on the next agenda and Dr. Forbes will look into it.

Charles Mello commented that the teachers' contract negotiations,

according to mayor, are not going well and that Mr. Faria and Medeiros had been attempting negotiations since the 5th and no agreement has been made. Mr. Melo asked if the City can be updated and if negotiations are moving forward. Dr. Forbes said she is hopeful. Mr. Faria related that we need relief from certain items and there are some things we cannot agree to. Mr. Melo asked if there is a good faith effort or is the union not willing to negotiate the present contract.

A motion was made by Mr. Faria to adjourn at 9:55PM, seconded by Mr. Medeiros. Vote 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia A. Iannelli, Administrative Assistant

Eileen Lovett, Clerk of the Committee (not present)